Amendments to the Claims

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application.

Listing of Claims:

1. (Currently amended) A method for determining a spanning tree, the method comprising acts of:

determining a root bridge identifier, the root bridge identifier being used as a root bridge identifier in a plurality of network forwarding devices, the plurality of network forwarding devices including a first network forwarding device and a second network forwarding device participating in a network ~~same spanning tree~~, the first network forwarding device including at least one first port not running spanning tree protocol, the second network forwarding device including at least one second port not running the spanning tree protocol, the first network forwarding device coupled to ~~exchanging data packets with~~ the second network forwarding device through a core network via the at least one first port and the at least one second port;

storing, by the first network forwarding device and the second network forwarding device, the root bridge identifier without exchanging the root bridge identifier in a spanning tree protocol message; and

using, by the first network forwarding device and the second network forwarding device, the root bridge identifier before, during and after reconfiguration of the ~~same~~ spanning tree ~~and without exchanging the root bridge identifier in a network message~~, wherein the first network forwarding device exchanges data packets with the second network forwarding device through the core network via the at least one first port and the at least one second port before, during and after the reconfiguration of the spanning tree.

2. (Previously presented) The method according to claim 1, wherein the act of determining the root bridge identifier includes an act of configuring, at the first network forwarding device and the second network forwarding device, the root bridge identifier as being the root bridge in the spanning tree.

3.   (Previously presented) The method according to claim 1, further comprising an act of configuring, at the first network forwarding device and the second network forwarding device, a same root bridge path cost.

4.   (Previously presented) The method according to claim 1, wherein the act of determining a root bridge identifier further comprises an act of configuring, in a first respective memory of the first network forwarding device and a second respective memory of the second network forwarding device, an entry for the root bridge identifier.

5.   (Previously presented) The method according to claim 1, further comprising an act of determining, for at least one first respective access port of the first network forwarding device and at least one second respective access port of the second network forwarding device, a root path cost.

6.   (Previously presented) The method according to claim 5, wherein the root path costs for the at least one first respective access port and the at least one second respective access port are the same value.

7.   (Previously presented) The method according to claim 5, wherein the core network includes a bridged network that couples the first network forwarding device to the second network forwarding device, and wherein the method further comprises an act of disabling, on the at least one first port and the at least one second port, transmission of bridge protocol data units (BPDUs) between the first network forwarding device and the second network forwarding device.

8.   (Original) The method according to claim 7, wherein the bridged network is implemented using Multiprotocol Label Switching (MPLS).

9.   (Previously presented) The method according to claim 7, further comprising an act of

transmitting, on the at least one first respective access port and the at least one second respective access port, bridge protocol data units (BPDUs).

10. (Previously presented) The method according to claim 9, wherein the first network forwarding device and the second network forwarding device are coupled by another network, and the method further comprises communicating the root bridge identifier in at least one BPDU transmitted on the another network.

11. (Previously presented) The method according to claim 5, wherein the core network includes a bridged network that couples the first network forwarding device to the second network forwarding device, and wherein the method further comprises an act of disabling, on at least one first logical connection of the first network forwarding device coupled to the bridged network and at least one second logical connection of the second network forwarding device coupled to the bridged network, transmission of bridge protocol data units (BPDUs) between the first network forwarding device and the second network forwarding device.

12. (Original) The method according to claim 11, wherein the bridged network is implemented using Multiprotocol Label Switching (MPLS).

13. (Previously presented) The method according to claim 11, further comprising an act of transmitting, on at least one first respective access port of the first network forwarding device and at least one second respective access port of the second network forwarding device, bridge protocol data units (BPDUs).

14. (Previously presented) The method according to claim 13, wherein the first network forwarding device and the second network forwarding device are coupled by another network, and the method further comprises communicating the root bridge identifier in at least one BPDU transmitted on the another network.

15. (Previously presented) The method according to claim 1, wherein the first network

forwarding device and the second network forwarding device are located at the edge of a provider network, and wherein the method further comprises an act of disabling, on at least one first respective port of the first network forwarding device and on at least one second respective port of the second network forwarding device, each of the first and second respective ports being coupled to the provider network, transmission of bridge protocol data units (BPDUs) between the first network forwarding device and the second network forwarding device.

16.   (Original) The method according to claim 1, wherein the root bridge identifier is not assigned to any network forwarding device in the spanning tree.

17.   (Withdrawn) A method for determining a spanning tree, the method comprising acts of:
        conducting a spanning tree protocol (STP) in first and second networks coupled by a third network, the act of conducting comprising an act of transmitting messages between network nodes in accordance with the STP, wherein transmission of messages between nodes in accordance with the STP over a third network is suppressed.

18.   (Withdrawn) A system for forwarding data in a communication network, the system being capable of participating in a spanning tree, the spanning tree including a plurality of network forwarding systems, the system comprising:
        a memory;
        a plurality of network interfaces, at least one of which is coupled to another network forwarding system through a plurality of networks, the another network forwarding system participating in the spanning tree;
        a control adapted to disable transmission of spanning tree messages over at least one of the plurality of networks coupling the system and the another network forwarding system; and
        a control adapted to configure, in the memory, an identifier of a root bridge for use in the spanning tree, wherein the identifier is not assigned to any network forwarding system participating in the spanning tree.

19.   (Withdrawn) The system according to claim 18, further comprising a control adapted to configure, in the memory, a root path cost value transmitted in the spanning tree messages, the spanning tree messages being transmitted over other ones of the plurality of networks except the at least one of the plurality of networks.

20.   (Withdrawn) The system according to claim 18, wherein a value of the identifier of the root bridge is configured to be the same value among the system and another network forwarding system.

21.   (Withdrawn) The system according to claim 20, wherein the control adapted to disable transmission of the spanning tree over at least one of the plurality of networks further comprises a control adapted to disable transmission of the spanning tree messages over at least one of the plurality of network interfaces.